

E-rate Newsletter for MI Libraries

E-rate News, Tips and Tricks

January 23, 2009

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Some reminders and tips for you prior to the Form 471 Window Closing at Midnight - February 12, 2009.

We are here to answer any questions about e-rate. Just call the E-rate Hotline at **888-307-6569**.



Quick Links

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Beat the Deadline - File your 471 early!

Even though the SLD treats all 471 applications filed before the deadline equally, they begin working on applications as they are received - and they have already started. If you already have the required information - don't wait for the deadline. If you file your 471 now, you will be on top of the stack for PIA review and eventual approval.

Many libraries file multiple FRNs. If you are waiting on information, signatures or other items for only some of your FRNs - you can still file early for the items that are ready now. A second Form 471 takes less time to file than the first, since you will already have your Free and Reduced data online (you can copy this from one 471 to another).

If you need help, call the hotline at 888-307-6569.

File Separate Form 471's for Priority 1 and Priority 2

The SLD has a saying "When in doubt - break it out." This applies to several scenarios...

1. If you are filing for both P1 (Telecommunications and Internet) and P2 (Equipment, Services and Maintenance) you should always file them on separate Form 471's. You will get faster approval of your Priority 1 requests because the SLD will not have to wait while examining your Priority 2 items.
2. If you are filing for anything controversial (P1 or P2) - or any services where you are not absolutely sure about 100% eligibility - you can 'split' them into separate FRN's or maybe even consider filing separate Form 471's.
3. Finally, if you are filing for Priority 2 and your libraries are in different discount brackets, consider filing separate Form 471's for each unique bracket (90%, 80% etc.). This will result in the highest discount rates being approved more quickly.

If you have any questions, please call our hotline.

Auditors and PIA Can be Wrong - Don't give up (without a fight)!

We have received several calls from libraries with some tough PIA questions and in some cases they strongly disagree with PIA's conclusions. Our advice is to negotiate (argue) your case as forcefully as possible with PIA before giving up and accepting a denial or reduction in funding. You can ask to speak to a reviewer's supervisor if necessary and you should always keep a good paper trail of your correspondence. Also, if you have a denial or a reduction in your funding request, you should immediately file an appeal.

Auditors are just people too - they can make mistakes and many times, you can make your case to refute their preliminary conclusions before they issue a final report. Even after the final report is issued you will have an opportunity to discuss the findings with SLD reviewers. Lastly, you can always appeal the final decision. If you think you're right - don't give up.

Call our helpline for assistance.

Get Ready for Michigan's Broadband Summit!

The planning is well underway by the Library of Michigan for a "Broadband Summit" to be held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009 in East Lansing, MI. This event will provide Michigan Libraries with a full-day of access to the latest information from the rapidly changing world of telecommunications services and the opportunities (and risks) that always come along with innovation. We will decode the tech-

jargon and discuss how these new technologies can improve library services.

We are in putting the final touches on the list of topics and lining up presenters and panels. BTU will be hosting one of the sessions on "Library and E-Rate Success Stories". We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to share their successful e-rate experiences. If you would like to participate as a panel member, contact the helpline.

Watch for news at www.michigan.gov/techforlibraries or call the helpline if you want more information. Send us an email with your ideas and suggestions.

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